

News Release

# Congressman Tom Cole

◆ Serving Oklahoma's Fourth Congressional District ◆

For Immediate Release  
October 16, 2003

For more information contact:  
Julie Bley (202) 225-1089

## **Cong. Cole Asks France, Germany and Russia to Help Rebuild Iraq**

**WASHINGTON D.C.-** Today legislation introduced by Congressman Tom Cole, urging France, Germany and Russia to help Iraq in its rebuilding process by forgiving the debts of the regime of Saddam Hussein to their respective countries was brought before the U.S. House of Representatives. After debate the House passed the resolution, 391-31.

"This week as we debate whether to send additional funds to help our troops and continue the rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan, it is appropriate to also ask France, Germany and Russia to take a constructive role in hard job of reconstruction that lies ahead in Iraq. The United States and our coalition partners have dedicated both the blood of our soldiers and billions of dollars to see this process through. All we are asking others to do is to forgive debts that are a burden to the people of Iraq and a hindrance to the rebuilding of their nation," Cole said.

"The loans in question were not to the Iraqi people, but to the regime of Saddam Hussein-a man who murdered hundreds and thousands of people, invaded his neighbors and fostered terrorism. Those who made these loans should not ask the free people of Iraq-the victims of Saddam's terror-to repay them," Cole said.

"A new, free Iraq will help create a more stable Middle East that will benefit all nations. This is an opportunity for France, Germany and Russia to practice the enlightened statesmanship they so often urge others to pursue," Congressman Cole said. "With steadfast dedication we will be able to free the Iraqi people of more than a tyrant leader; we will be able to free them from an oppressive government and a failing economy."

Although the exact amount of Iraq's debt has not been determined, the Jubilee Iraq-a non-governmental organization that advocates broad debt forgiveness-reported that Iraq's debt was somewhere between \$95 billion and \$153 billion. The Bush Administration has used a figure of up to \$200 billion in debt.